



Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force

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AGENDA DATE: December 2, 2009

TO: Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force

FROM: Front Country Trails Task Force Staff

Subject: **Front Country Trails Maintenance Update**

RECOMMENDATION: That the Front Country Trails (FCT) Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force receives a status report on FCT trail maintenance projects.

Discussion:

This staff report provides an update on the trail maintenance activities completed on all trails within the Jesusita Burn area in preparation for winter rain events. During a one month period October 12th to November 10th an intensive trail maintenance program was conducted to significantly reduce trail infra-structure damage and to reduce additional burn area soil erosion. Trail maintenance activities included the completion of Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) prescribed mitigation measures through the efforts of volunteers, California Conservation Corps (CCCs), and Forest Service Fire Crews. As a result of this work the agencies have re-opened some trails within the Jesusita Burn.

Forest Service trails engineer shares expertise and provides training

Garrett Villanueva, Forest Service trails engineer from the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, was funded by the Santa Barbara Ranger District to share his expertise in sustainable trail construction in support of the BAER assessment for trail protection measures. During his two week stay, in addition to flagging locations and developing a plan for the installation of erosion control measures for trails within the burn, Garrett was available to meet with FCT staff and the stakeholders group. On a Saturday, he held a daylong volunteer training day for interested volunteers trail crew leaders from the community. Funded through BAER and Los Padres National Forest allocated trail funds, Garrett trained and spent days working with the California Conservation Corps that were contracted to do the trail construction work.

Rock Water-bars, Nicks, and Rolling Dips

The new techniques and trail construction terminology was well received and appreciated by all that got a chance to work with Garrett. Approximately 85 water drainage dips were flagged to be constructed on the Tunnel trail alone. Drainage dips or rolling dips as explained by Garrett, are now the accepted engineering design for

installing sustainable water drainage features, the design is now included in Standard Specification for Construction of Trails, Forest Service EM-7720-102.

Fifteen volunteers got to experience firsthand how to construct a typical 25 foot long rolling dip on the Tunnel trail, while replacing the old standard waterbar. A rolling dip by definition is 25 feet in linear length of drop (dip) and swale (berm). The engineering objective is to establish a reversal in the trail grade thus forcing water off the trail surface. The dip is open to the outside of the trail to release the water flow and the armored swale reverses the grade keeping the water from moving down the slope of the trail. Or more simply described, the material excavated to create the dip is utilized to build the swale. A word of caution, the CCCs and Volunteers alike found that the construction of one rolling dip was extremely labor intensive and time consuming. The CCCs worked a total of 20 days on the BAER project, converting many water bars to rolling dips on the Tunnel and Rattlesnake trails. Rock water bars, some rolling dips, and Nicks (smaller drainage dips) were completed on the Jesusita, West Fork, and Tunnel Connector trails by a combination of CCCs and fire crew support. Additional trail maintenance work during this period on trails within the burn was performed by Forest Service fire crews, the Los Padres Hotshots, and the Santa Ynez Helitack crew.

Public Information

With the trail erosion control work completed, the agencies did re- open the Rattlesnake Trail and Jesusita Trail from the San Roque Road Trail Head to Inspiration Point. Although the trail improvements were completed throughout the Jesusita Fire area, the Tunnel side of the Jesusita trail, Tunnel Trail, and Tunnel Connector will remain closed until spring 2010 due to the need to protect areas that received a combination of aerial and mechanically applied hydro-mulch.

Trails in the burn area remain subject to erosion and periodic rock debris, and may present unsafe conditions during wet weather. Remaining on the designated trails will reduce the potential for damage and additional erosion.

The agencies, along with a network of trail volunteers will continue to monitor the trails through the winter season. Additional trail work to address restoration needs may be needed after rain events. Trails may be closed in the future if wet weather presents significant concerns about trail safety. The public will be notified of any future changes to the trail system.

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